

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DPW-01 SR-02 ORM-01 DODE-00 OPR-02

SCA-01 PPT-01 A-01 L-02 /064 W

----- 103280

R 260512Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3062

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CPAS, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: TRAVEL TO AND WITHIN LAOS

REFS: A) VIENTIANE 1620

B) STATE 058996

1. WE CONCUR IN DEPARTMENT'S VIEW (REF B) THAT TRAVEL ON THE MEKONG AND ON MOST LAND ROUTES IN LAOS IS POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS, AS DEAN/SHARMAN CASE ILLUSTRATES, AND THAT OFFICIAL "OPENING" OF THE UPPER MEKONG BY JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENTS (JCCIA) DOES NOT REMOVE THE RISKS. (LPF OPPOSITION HAS MEANWHILE DELAYED "OPENING" OF ROUTE 13.)

2. IN ADDITION, SEVERAL INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO US IN WHICH U.S. TOURISTS AND OTHER CAUCASIANS WERE HARASSED, TEMPORARILY DETAINED OR ARBITRARILY ARRESTED BY PATHET LAO, WHO REMAIN HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS OF AMERICANS. WHILE THESE INCIDENTS WERE LESS SERIOUS THAN THE DILLON-AYRES CASE (VIENTIANE 1621 AND PREVIOUS), THEY INDICATE THAT THE BENEVOLENT ATTITUDE ONCE SHOWN YOUNG TRAVELERS BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IS GIVING WAY TO NEW POLICY OF STRICTER

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CONTROL.

3. MOREOVER, PGNU AT DIRECTION OF PRIME MINISTER IS ATTEMPTING TO BAN ENTRY INTO LAOS OF WHAT IT CALLS "HIPPIES" ON GROUND THAT THEY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT ON LAO SOCIETY AND IN PARTICULAR ON LAO YOUTH (SEE VIENTIANE 0371; TEXT OF IMPLEMENTING MEMORANDUM, PUBLISHED IN OFFICIAL LAO PRESSE, IS BEING FORWARDED BY OM). CHECKS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY LAST WEEK, HOWEVER, REVEALED THAT MINISTRY HAD NOT YET RECEIVED OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS IN THIS REGARD FROM PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND THEREFORE HAD SENT NO INSTRUCTIONS TO LAO FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS. EVEN AFTER SUCH INSTRUCTIONS ARE ISSUED, THEY MAY NOT BE SCRUPULOUSLY FOLLOWED, WITH RESULT THAT "WORLD TRAVELERS" IN SOME CASES MAY BE ABLE TO OBTAIN LAO VISAS AS BEFORE BUT HAVE TROUBLE WITH LAO IMMIGRATION ON ARRIVAL.

4. IN LIGHT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, AND SINCE MANY TRAVELERS ARRIVE HERE AFTER ONLY BRIEF TRANSIT OF THAILAND, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT ISSUE UNCLASSIFIED CIRCULAR AIRGRAM INSTRUCTING ALL EA AND NEA DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS TO ADVISE PROSPECTIVE TRAVELERS OF (A) HAZARDS OF SURFACE TRAVEL WITHIN LAOS; (B) INCREASINGLY STRICT POLICIES OF PATHET LAO OFFICIALS IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG; (C) ANNOUNCED INTENTION OF PGNU TO STOP ISSUING VISAS TO "HIPPIES" AND TO DENY EXTENSIONS OF STAY TO THOSE NOW HERE OR SUBSEQUENTLY ADMITTED.

WHITEHOUSE

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